



PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: October 21, 2019

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Release Number: RI20-02

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SBA Awards State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) Grant to the John H. Chafee Center for International Business

\$375,000 In Federal Dollars Awarded To Help Expand Exporting In R.I.

Providence, RI – For the 8th time, the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) announced that the John H. Chafee Center for International Business has been selected as the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) Grant recipient for the state of Rhode Island. The Chafee Center’s work involves export entry and growth among small business in Rhode Island.

“The SBA is proud to partner with the Rhode Island STEP grant awardee, the John H. Chafee Center for International Business at Bryant University,” said District Director Mark S. Hayward. “Export-supported jobs are estimated to pay 15-20% more than comparable non-exporting positions, yet fewer than one percent of small businesses export; The Chafee Center has done an incredible job growing those small businesses that export, and this award is a testament to that proven track record,” added Hayward.

The SBA recognizes, even at the highest level, the importance of exporting. “These grants are especially helpful as our country is in the midst of negotiating a number of trade agreements, including one between the United States–Mexico–Canada (USMCA),” said SBA Acting Administrator Chris Pilkerton. “All of the Administration’s work is aimed at modernizing and creating a better deal for America’s consumers, businesses, including small businesses, and workers. The SBA’s STEP partners not only help entrepreneurs increase and diversify their customer base; they also help to create and retain local jobs.”

Today, trade represents nearly 58% of the world’s \$80 trillion economy, and 95% of the world’s consumers are located outside the United States. Exporting is an important way for U.S. small businesses to grow revenue and boost local economies. The STEP Program is designed to help states increase the number of small businesses that export and the value of those exports.

“We value our partnership with the SBA and Commerce RI, and the opportunity to make a difference for Rhode Island businesses,” says Bryant University Provost and Chief Academic Officer Glenn Sulmasy, J.D., L.L.M. “Increasing exports is a proven way to add jobs, increase profits, and promote continued growth for our state.”

The 2019 STEP award will help Rhode Island small businesses gain more access to the information and tools they need to succeed in export-related activities. Exporting activities include: participating in foreign trade missions and foreign market sales trips, obtaining services provided by the

U.S. Department of Commerce, accessing expertise in designing international marketing campaigns and export trade show exhibits, and participating in training workshops..

Expanding the base of small business exporters and improving the process to explore new trade opportunities is a key component of SBA's small business strategy. Since 2011, the STEP program has awarded approximately \$157 million in grants to fund export opportunities and increase the footprint of small businesses in countries all over the world.

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About the U.S. Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration makes the American dream of business ownership a reality. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more visit www.sba.gov.